



# **.GREAT VICTORIAN. RAIL TRAIL**

## **WELCOME TO THE GREAT VICTORIAN RAIL TRAIL (GVRT) TOOLKIT**

Designed to help tourism operators, businesses and communities find and build connections with this vibrant community asset, this Toolkit provides the essential '**How To**' more actively be part of the GVRT's shared future.

Practical, easy to read information and resources will:

- **help** you and your organisation/business create new and engaging ways of connecting with the Rail Trail;
- **share** stories from other Rail Trail communities who have worked together to engage with their Rail Trail in fresh, inspiring and collaborative ways;
- **give** real examples and insights into how the 'ordinary' can actually be 'extraordinary', for the visitor';
- **offer** guidelines for approvals and permit process, links to extra resources, funding sources, tips on helpful contacts.

## **MUCH MORE THAN JUST A PATHWAY .....**

The GVRT can be many things to many people:

- A cherished *community space* and the setting for all types of special community celebrations and events, creating cycles and rhythms of life along the Rail Trail. Establishing new traditions then become part of the community fabric and the trail's legacy.

- An *outdoors classroom* where organised learning takes place in a natural setting via interpretation of places or points of interest along the trail - environmental, historical, artistic or cultural related and supported by GRVT signage and website.
- Journey based experiences in which Rail Trail users participate in a variety of *adventure challenges or fundraising events: duathlons; cycle events; horse endurance rides; walking pilgrimages.....*
- A *conduit for* connecting visitors with locals. *Engaging, interactive, authentic tourism experiences* can be something so simple and part of the everyday for a local. For a visitor this might be the very thing that creates a sense of connectedness; the reason to stay an extra couple of days!
- An '*outdoor*' *Public Art Gallery* that creates signature spaces along the Rail Trail, framing experiences and making memories. Recurring art elements can help unify the Rail Trail, even as it passes through changing landscapes, varying social histories, different towns. Artwork can result in a series of visual experiences and places, calling for exploration and encouraging use of the entire length of the trail. The experience of the trail user is enriched by the integration and celebration of artistic and thematic expression through various art forms.
- A *biological corridor* requiring ongoing nurturing and care by environmental groups. Tree plantings, bushland care days; 'Landcare Live, Grow, Explore Community Days'; volunteer trail maintenance working bees.

### ***How can we connect with the Rail Trail?***

*Here's some examples of Business & Community Connection with Rail Trails:*

#### ***1.Educational***

***Schools Project: Sensory Gardens Trail, Fairfield Heritage Trail in Lancaster, Ohio.***

The idea behind the trail was to build an outdoor experience, easily accessible for the students that would stimulate and engage their senses. The first phase of the project includes

items such as herb pots, fragrant flowers and bushes, bird feeders and houses, native trees, grasses and art pieces. A local Lions Club also installed a rough bark tactile display that includes Braille interpretation. Also installed are six large, permanently mounted outdoor musical instruments that have been custom designed with their own tethered mallets. The entire trail is wheelchair accessible.

## **2. Community Art: A Trailside Public Art Gallery**

### **The Orange Trace, Ventura River Trail, Southern California**

Opened in 1999, the Ventura River Trail is a pedestrian and bicycle path that follows the old Southern Pacific "right of way" from Main Street to Foster Park, 6.3 miles inland. The path links the Ojai Valley and Coastal Omer Rains Trail to create a longer 17-mile bike path recognized as one of the finest in Southern California.

Through funding by the City of Ventura Public Art Program, the natural landscape has been further enhanced through the commissioning and installation of artwork that seeks to interpret Ventura's economic, cultural and environmental history. One of these works is The Orange Trace - a series of 32 concrete markers topped by artefacts once used in the local oil fields and placed along the entire trail as distance markers. The idea was that a series of unfolding images (cast bronze oranges) would emerge as the rider rode along the trail. The oranges were crafted as realistically as possible, and arranged so as to appear to have fallen from the train that historically transferred produce from Ojai to Ventura.

This sculpture, as well as the work of the other five artists, transforms the bike-riding activity by engaging the rider in a more interactive and reflective experience, and by providing the Ventura River Trail with its unique identity.

## **3. Sporting Events: Otago Central Rail Trail Duathlon**

The Otago Central Rail Trail is a 150km cycleway following the path of the former Otago Central Railway. The trail goes from Middlemarch to Clyde in the South Island's Central Otago region - and is a living history of farming communities and gold mining in New Zealand.

There are 3 key Rail Trail events (Rail Trail Duathlon, GoldRush and Cycling Otago) held over the Nov-Mar period. 2014 is the 15th anniversary of the legendary Otago Central Rail Trail Duathlon. The event is organised and managed by the Combined Lions Clubs of Central Otago who hold a licence from DOC. The OCRT Duathlon is a non-profit event with all officials working in a voluntary capacity. Any surplus from each year's event is committed

through the Combined Central Otago Lions Clubs to projects associated with the Otago Central Rail Trail, to maintain, develop and promote this unique recreational facility.

*AND MORE IDEAS . . .*

#### **4. Family Social Rides: *BABIES, BIKES & BRUNCH***

##### **Munda Bididi Trail, Western Australia.**

This annual ride with a focus on family and fun, is around 1.5 hours on the loop trail out of Sculpture Park. Ride through the beautiful Perth Hills forest, feast on a healthy picnic brunch and meet some of the cute and cuddly bush babies, or just relax and enjoy the environment.

Includes: Guide riders, water and fruit, marquee, morning tea and animal encounter

#### **5. Fundraising Rides: *CLIMATE RIDE***

##### **California**

Climate Ride is about cycling, green energy, combating climate change, promoting sustainability, meeting inspirational people doing great work in all these realms, and making some lifelong friends. It's also about riding 300 miles through some of California's most beautiful and historic regions.

In the evenings, Climate Riders listen to inspirational speakers from all corners of the green energy, sustainability, and cycling worlds, and get to know fellow riders working toward the same goals.

#### **6. Rail Trail Product Development:**

**Otago Central Rail Trail: *Rail Trail Express*** provides airport transfers to and from the Rail Trail, baggage pick and delivery from one night's accommodation to the next and ferrying people and bikes between each end of the Rail Trail with drop-offs and pickups all along the way. Other services include Central Otago bus tours.

**Together, we can look forward to the innovation this Toolkit stimulates and the creative activities and product development that result.**